2: Turnbull E-S (1951-1956) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
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114 rest-house or with other Europeans. Mr. and Mrs. Putnam had long established their own *bona fides*, and indeed fitted perfectly into the traditional village structure in this area, where a number of different
114 village tribes converge. Their friendship for me placed me on a par-
123 ticularly favorable footing with both the villagers and the Mbuti, and I knew that I could count on protection from any interference from other Europeans, administrators included, who might wish to visit me. (Naturally I established perfect accord with the central and local administration, who offered every co-operation, but I was particularly concerned that I should not receive "friendly visits," as it was the policy of both villagers and Mbuti, for different reasons, to keep Europeans out of the forest.)

[122] Having established my headquarters, building a somewhat larger but otherwise typical mud house on the fringe of the village where the Mbuti had their semi-permanent village camp (see Plan 1A, 1B), I paid my respects to the divers local village chiefs and head men, mostly of the Bira, Ndaka, and Ngwana tribes. At this time
• [164] the local Mbuti band was in the village, but a sudden epidemic of
[165] stomach disorders, resulting in a number of unexpected deaths, caused them to leave for a prolonged hunting spell in the forest, taking me with them.

While the deaths, which included men, women and children, were most untimely and unhappy from a personal point of view, they achieved everything else that I could have wished for as an anthropologist. Prior to precipitating the flight back to the forest, they gave me an opportunity to study in the greatest detail the reaction to the death of an Mbuti in the village, both from the village point of view and from that of the Mbuti themselves. I at once witnessed what I
123 had seen on my previous visit when observing the *nkumbi* initiation;
648 namely, the almost desperate attempt of the villagers to assert au-
#177 thority over the Mbuti. In this case the attempt was made by con-
[192] trolling the mourning and burial proceedings, claiming that the Mbuti had no ritual authority in this respect and were dependent on their *kpara* ("masters"). The villagers attempted to subject the Mbuti to the supernatural sanctions of village lore, and then they attempted to assert more direct political control by calling on their own ritual specialists to determine the cause of the deaths, and to search for the witch responsible. This will be described later (pp. 74 *seq.*); it is mentioned here to show how closely I was thrown into contact, at the outset, with the Mbuti/Villager relationship.

2: Turnbull B-5 (1951-1960) 1965 RO4 Pygmies RO4
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defined way, they do not hesitate to return at once to the forest. On the other hand, if they consider the death perfectly natural, they do not want to be bothered with a senseless preoccupation with causes. They know that in the course of the discussion the villagers will find opportunity to raise a number of issues better forgotten, such as unfulfilled obligations, and they are also uneasy at keeping the name of the dead person alive, in this way, for longer than is necessary. The forest procedure would simply be to bury the body, probably by pulling the hut down on top of it, then to abandon the camp and build a new one, never again mentioning the dead person by name.

On one occasion already cited (p. 10), an Mbuti funeral party returning from the grave converted itself into a wedding party. On another occasion, when the Mbuti were in a particularly festive mood and were bent on a long stay in the village, they played along with the witch-hunt even to the point of suggesting a second diviner from another village to check the findings of the first, stretching the proceedings out in this way for nearly a week. This meant that all the "mourners" (and Mbuti from villages up to twenty miles away came to this funeral) had to be fed for that long by the villagers. When the final act was done and the diviner had pointed out the witch that had "caused" the death, the Mbuti became annoyed that the villagers said something would have to be done about it, talking about a propitiation and a cleansing ceremony, with restitution. When the Mbuti saw they could not talk the villagers out of these less popular final rites, they returned to the forest, taking the "witch" with them.

On the few occasions on which I have seen the Mbuti apparently go through with the act until the very end—that is, divining the witch, accusing him or her, trying the case, giving judgment and going through the necessary cleansing rituals and actually making the necessary restitutive payments—it was when they already had a grievance against a certain person and chose this way of expressing it. On each such occasion there was not, among the Mbuti, the slightest thought that the "witch" actually had anything to do with the death. On two occasions the accused was a woman singularly well equipped to appear as a witch, her face being almost entirely eaten away by yaws. She was actually extremely well liked, but nonetheless she belonged to the volatile Cephu family who were always joining and breaking away from the main band, and she was very loud in her comments about that main band. Further, her husband, Aberi, normally also well liked, was particularly quick-tempered and a disturbing element.

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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hunter may initiate the action. Thus the *elima* and the *molimo*, which are crisis festivals, are initiated by the hunters, but it is the elders who control them and give them their spiritual quality. It is the elders who act not only as arbiters between the members of the band, but between the band and the forest, between this life and the next. Even in the most ordinary run of everyday life there is seldom a day that does not demand from one elder or another, man or woman, some opinion that will be couched in terms like "such and such is good for (or pleasing to) the forest," or "this makes my spirit (*roho*) feel good."

The greatest departures from daily life occur when the band visits the village, or when a villager visits the band. In either case it is as though the whole social structure of the Mbuti were suddenly changed. A single individual becomes, all at once, a chief. Age groups break up and nuclear families come to the fore. The only central fire will be that of the "chief." But as this is not part of the forest world, exceptions occur within the forest context only rarely. There is seldom any disaster such as the invasion of a camp by elephant, though it happens sometimes. Hunting is generally more than adequate throughout the year. But though hunger does sometimes come to the Mbuti, starvation is unknown. Sickness is not uncommon, but is rarely serious. Throughout the year daily life goes its usual way interrupted only by major, inevitable crises of the life cycle.

BIRTH

Birth is the first crisis of life, and among the Mbuti it is, as elsewhere, not without its attendant dangers. Though no statistics are available, it is the opinion of villagers and Mbuti, and of many Europeans, doctors and otherwise, who know both communities, that infant mortality is appreciably less among the Mbuti, and sterility less common. This may be due to the fact that their relative isolation has defended the Mbuti against the venereal diseases widespread among the villagers. Be that as it may, there is no doubt that the Mbuti evidently feel less need for concern at childbirth. This applies to both the nuclear family and to the band. There is absolutely no formal recognition on the part of the band, and only the barest of interest. Considering the fluid and nonlineal composition of the band this is not surprising, particularly since, for this type of band, birth is only one form of recruitment, and by no means the most sure or

2: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1958) 1965 FO4 Pygmies FO4
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19. In one of Cephu's camps, Abeti talks to his family. His wife, her face ravaged by yaws, holds their youngest child in a sling of fresh-painted bark cloth.

2: Turnbull E-6 (1951-1960) 1965 PO4 Pygmies PO4
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ment of a dispute is to avoid attaching blame to one individual or another, for this would result in a rift in the band. The blame has to be either deflected or dissipated, and the village notion of witchcraft is sometimes used to this end.

In the prolonged dispute over Ekianga and his three wives, the situation was aggravated by having, in the same band, Ekianga's brother-in-law, Amabosu, with whom he had exchanged sisters, and Amabosu's mother, old Sau. Sau made an ideal scapegoat, conforming to the village notions of what a witch should look like, and her role at times became rather like that of the camp clown. She would be accused of dancing outside people's huts in the middle of the night, and on one occasion she was distinctly heard to mutter in an exasperated voice, "Do they expect me to urinate inside my hut?"—for she had indeed emerged in the middle of the night to answer a call of nature. Nonetheless, on that occasion she rose to the needs of the moment and agreed that she had been dancing because she had been made to dance, and she was not responsible, and she was sorry for any harm she had done.

However, she was a major and active peacemaker in the family squabble, actively intervening to prevent Ekianga and Amabosu from fighting, and equally actively looking after the children of all the wives involved, passing them from one to the other and in this way helping to preserve reasonable relationships at least between her daughter and her son's wife.

All the more in the village was Sau used as a scapegoat. But whereas in the forest the scapegoat, even if the clown, feels the full weight of the blame he takes upon himself and may suffer some unpopularity, though temporary, in the village there is no such disadvantage, and old Sau played her role with zest. At a time when there were an unusual number of deaths through stomach disorders contracted in the village, the Mbuti were sharply criticized by the villagers for allowing this to happen and not taking the proper protective measures. It was plainly witchcraft, if not sorcery, and it was their duty to find the witch and have the necessary purification. An elaborate witch-hunt was held in the village, and of course Sau was finally "divined" and dragged out of her hut—where, at the time, she was dozing—complaining about all the noise.

Emerging into the center of the village she made all the usual protests, and performed the usual trick of stabbing herself with a knife, but holding it carefully so that it just nicked the skin sufficiently to

3: Turnbull E-5 (1951-1959) 1962 FO4 Pygmies FO4 Mbuti

This incident shows as well as any how a tiny, and often imagined, insult can be magnified out of all proportion until it becomes a serious issue, threatening the peace of the camp. In any small, closed community, there are hidden tensions everlastingly at play. They are capricious, they are fluctuating and vapid, but every one of them is potentially explosive.

Of the two brothers Aberi was the elder. He was aggressive and ugly, and he considered himself the head of the family. The oldest brother, Kelemoke's father, had died. But Kelemoke had been brought up by Masalito rather than Aberi because everyone agreed that Masalito, if younger, had much more sense. He was also a better hunter, a better singer, a better dancer, and considerably better-looking. He had a prettier wife too; Aberi's wife had lost half her face, which had been eaten away by yaws. So between these two brothers there were always strained feelings. Open conflict was avoided because Masalito usually lived with the main group, of which his wife was a member, while Aberi always hunted with Cephu, his cousin.

But Masalito was kindly and liked peace and quiet, so when Cephu joined the main group at Apa Lelo he often used to visit his brother in Cephu's camp. Aberi's wife was a hard-working woman, and although it was difficult to look at her without flinching, she was loved by everyone. One afternoon, on a rainy day, Masalito wandered over to visit his brother. Rainy days are not happy days in a hunting camp; they are often oppressive, and of course hunting is impossible. People are couped up in their tiny leaf huts, thinking of all the game that is going uncaught. Aberi was sleeping, so Masalito sat down beside his sister-in-law, Tamasa, and asked her for a smoke. She passed him the clay pipe bowl and a little tobacco, and a long stem cut freshly from the center of a plantain leaf. She had recently come back from a visit to a Negro village and had brought several of these stems with her, as they give by far the best smoke.

Masalito smoked a few puffs, then passed the pipe to Tamasa. But

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VILLAGE INITIATION AND MAGIC

After Sabani had danced around him, with the drums getting louder and louder, he was picked up and carried by a villager to the stream where the cutting was to take place. Some boys were cut in the initiation camp, others in the center of the village, and some in the stream; it depended largely on the whim of the moment. In the camp there was a scaffold on which the other boys sat while the doctor cut, but down in the stream, a short distance into the forest, Sansiwake had to stand on the rocks, the cold water splashing over his feet. He was held by the arms and legs so that he would not be able to struggle, and his considerate uncle, Masalito, clapped a hand over his mouth so that his screams would not bring him disgrace in the eyes of the villagers. But Sansiwake could not stand the pain; perhaps Sabani was drunk and cut badly. Sansiwake bit Masalito and then screamed his head off, struggling until he almost broke loose. Two days later, when he was just beginning to recover, it was decided that he would have to be cut again, as Sabani had not done as he should. Shortly afterward the weakened and thoroughly dejected boy went down with pneumonia, and would have died if the Pygmies had not broken all the rules of the initiation camp and kept him warm and well fed.

He was the only one to suffer any ill effects, and his behavior would have brought him lasting disgrace had he been a villager. The Pygmies, however, showed only consideration and sympathy for Sansiwake, and criticized the villagers openly for their unnecessary carelessness and brutality. The villagers retorted that Sansiwake's illness was only the penalty for his not having behaved himself properly.

From the moment the boys enter the camp they are meant to stand on their own feet without any help from their relatives, but the older brothers and fathers of the Pygmy boys were constantly comforting and encouraging them, at the risk of being ridiculed themselves. Masalito, in particular, was not afraid of being sneered at by the villagers. One boy, Kaoya, who was cut in the camp, was beaten as he

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Our last stop was outside Mambasa, where the local administrator in a fit of well-meaning but not very far-seeing zeal was "liberating" the Pygmies from the villagers. He did this by cutting down clearings along the roadside and setting up villages for the Pygmies to live in, so that they could cultivate plantations that would provide additional crops for the government to collect and market. Kenge was immensely amused at the thought of being liberated. He said the Pygmies would still go to the Negro villages. Why should they work on their own plantations when they could steal from real villagers? 648 199 361

We accompanied the administrator, a fat and jovial man, hospitable and friendly, who genuinely liked the Pygmies. But he could not be made to believe that what he was doing was wrong. He had called various groups of Pygmies down to the clearings and talked to each group, explaining that the government would supply them with all the necessary tools for cultivation and give them the seeds to plant. In time, each Pygmy village would have a baraza, like the Negro villages, and a schoolhouse, and the important ones would have their own dispensaries. He then asked in a democratic way if they wanted to come and join the plan. They all shouted yes, to a man, and the administrator turned to me with a victorious smile of pride. He then commanded the villagers he had brought with him to distribute beans to each Pygmy, with instructions as to how and where to plant them. The Pygmies all lined up, and as soon as each had received his share he rejoined the end of the line. When they were caught out and taken off the line to their allotments to plant the beans, they listened gravely and began to work. Half an hour later most of the beans were being cooked for lunch.

The plan was doomed to failure for several reasons. For one, the Pygmies are not able to stand the direct sunlight and become ill outside the shade of the forest. They also become ill because they have no resistance, as the villagers have, to the kinds of disease they are open to in a sedentary life. Water which the villager can drink with 648 199 361 147 164

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impunity gives severe stomach disorder to the Pygmy, who is used to the fresh clean water of forest streams. Flies and mosquitoes carry germs unknown to him in his natural home. But above all, his entire code of behavior and thought is geared to his nomadic forest life: to bring him to a settled life in a village is to ask him overnight to abandon one way of life, a way he has lived for thousands of years, and adopt another. Where the Pygmies did make the attempt there was complete moral as well as physical disintegration. Not long ago a Belgian friend from the Congo told me that the day before he had left, on one small "model plantation" where the Pygmies were being liberated, twenty-nine had died in one day from sunstroke.

I spoke about the plan to many Pygmies, and when Kenge got back to Epulu he talked as much about it as about anything else that he had seen on his journey to the outside world. Old Moke summed up the attitude that I had found everywhere. "The forest is our home; when we leave the forest, or when the forest dies, we shall die. We are the people of the forest."

165 After this come the various diseases
164 which kill the pygmies. Pneumonia and dysentery are the greatest killers: infection is rare. Far less important
136 than disease even is the action of hostile
165 animals—elephants, buffalo, or leopards. Once in a while an old leopard, too old to catch antelope, will dare run the risk of sneaking into a pygmy camp at night. The pygmy houses have no doors, and the leopard may slink into a house and grab a pygmy. At the noise so created, other pygmies will wake up and attack the leopard with spears or firebrands. Sometimes the leopard wins completely and carries off his victim's body, to munch at leisure. Sometimes he drops the mangled corpse, and at other times the pygmy may survive. I have seen one pygmy woman who had most of her face bitten away by a leopard and who
165 still lived. The pygmy resistance to
164 wound infections is incredibly great, although they will die like flies from pneumonia.

165 Another occasional cause of death is
392 burning. Pygmies are unusually restless during the sleeping hours of the night, and individuals get up frequently to relieve themselves. After doing so the pygmy seldom goes back to bed immediately. He usually sits in front of his hut for a while, in front of the fire.
[216] Here he will often light up his pipe and take a deep puff of tobacco, apparently to get the maximum effect of the nico-

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